
U.S. Representative

John Spratt

South Carolina ■ 5th District

News Release

May 19, 2000, For Immediate Release

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Spratt Announces Federal Aid for Charlotte Regional Transit

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today that the House has approved a spending bill providing \$5 million to help Charlotte-Mecklenburg build a North-South Corridor transit system that could extend to York County.

“I first obtained an appropriation of \$500,000 to do a corridor study for a light-rail commuter line between Charlotte and Rock Hill in 1991,” said Spratt. “Since then, I have helped obtain \$8 million to develop the concept of light-rail service for our metropolitan area. Though I worked for the money, I wondered if light-rail in our area would ever come to fruition.

“When Charlotte and Mecklenburg County both asked for my help on this next step, I gladly teamed up with Reps. Mel Watt (D-NC) and Sue Myrick (R-NC) to get the money appropriated. The first link to be built lies in Mecklenburg County, but the line moves in our direction and is a necessary piece of any light-rail system that includes York County,” Spratt said.

The Department of Transportation Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001, passed by the House today, allocates transit as well as highway funds.

“I worked the Democratic side of the Transportation Subcommittee to see that this request was funded,” said Spratt. “I’m pleased with the House’s action and hope that the Senate will follow our lead.”

Spratt added, “Charlotte is the dynamo in a fast-growing metropolitan area of 1.8 million people and 900,000 workers, thousands of them from York County. Vehicle miles driven in the Charlotte area have grown at a rate almost twice the national average. Only seven other cities in the U.S. have posted faster growth. Light rail is not the only solution or the solution that will suit everybody, but it’s part of the solution.”

Charlotte, working with its neighboring communities, has developed a comprehensive transit/land-use plan for the next 25 years. Among its long-range provisions, this plan calls for the development of major, high-capacity transit services in the I-77 corridor to support new development.

“Even though governing bodies throughout the region have agreed that light rail has a

role, they need federal support to supplement the money being obtained by local sources,” Spratt said, “particularly if the system is to be built to the South Carolina line, and on into York County.

“The estimated total cost of the South Corridor Light Rail project, which will run to Pineville, N.C., and one day to Rock Hill, is over \$250 million. So, this project will need to be an intergovernmental partnership to come to fruition,” he said.

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